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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 20 July 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (E/1992/22, E/1992/23 and Add.1, E/1992/103; A/47/41)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take a decision on the 10 draft resolutions and 40 draft decisions recommended to it for adoption by the Social Committee. The texts of draft resolutions I to VII were contained in the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its forty-eighth session (E/1992/22, chap. I). Those of draft resolutions VIII to X were contained in the report of the Social Committee (E/1992/103). The texts of the draft decisions were contained in document E/1992/22, except for those of draft decisions IX, XXXVI and XXXVIII to XL, which were contained in document E/1992/103, and of decisions XXXV and XXXVII, which appeared in the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1992/23). There were no programme budget implications before the Council in connection with the adoption of the draft resolutions presented in the Commission's report. He reminded members of the Council that, in accordance with the Council's standard practice, any observer delegations wishing to make statements should do so before the Council had taken action on a proposal rather than when members of the Council might wish to speak in explanation of vote.

Draft resolution I

The PRESIDENT recalled that the Social Committee had adopted draft resolution I by 31 votes to 16, with 4 abstentions, in a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution I.

In favour: Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Guinea, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Somalia, Suriname, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Against: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Argentina, Belarus, Russian Federation.

Draft resolution I was adopted by 29 votes to 17, with 3 abstentions.

Mr. KUEHL (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had been constantly in the forefront of opposition to apartheid and been heartened by the recent irreversible steps towards its eradication in South Africa. At such a time, it served no constructive purpose for bodies such as the Commission and the Council to persist in the inflammatory responses of the past. The current difficulties made it all the more important for international bodies to encourage all the parties concerned to return to the negotiating table; unbalanced resolutions of the sort just adopted would do nothing to improve matters.

Mr. BURCUOĞLU (Turkey) said that his delegation had voted against draft resolution I, whose text failed to reflect the evolution of the situation in South Africa. Turkey would continue its efforts towards achieving the goal of a non-racial society in South Africa.

Mr. JAAFARI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, had his delegation been present during the voting, it would have voted in favour of draft resolution I.

Mr. LAZARO (Peru) said that his delegation, too, had it been present at the time, would have voted in favour.

Mr. OUTLULE (Botswana) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution I in the Social Committee, and would have done so at the current meeting had it been present at the time of the vote. It reiterated, however, that it reserved its position in regard to paragraph 5.

Draft resolution II

Draft resolution II was adopted.

Mr. BURCUOĞLU (Turkey) said that his delegation had joined the consensus in the adoption of draft resolution II and had taken an active part in preparing the draft declaration concerned (E/CN.4/1992/48 and Corr.1,

(Mr. Burcuoğlu, Turkey)

annex I), but it felt that the failure to define the term "minority" could lead to confusion. Turkey, therefore, would interpret its rights and obligations pursuant to the draft declaration in the light of bilateral or international agreements in which the status of minorities was clearly defined.

A further textual shortcoming was the failure to mention the principle of political unity of States, a concept which should supplement those such as territorial integrity and political independence.

Draft resolution III

Draft resolution III was adopted.

Mr. BURCUOĞLU (Turkey) said that his delegation had participated actively in the working group referred to in draft resolution III, and that a number of its proposals had been adopted. Unfortunately, its proposal that the text should refer to measures to prevent international terrorism, as set forth in General Assembly resolution 40/61, had not been adopted. His delegation reserved its position, therefore, in regard to the text of the draft declaration.

Ms. FENG Cui (China) said that her delegation had stated its position on draft resolution III in the Social Committee.

Draft resolutions IV to X

Draft resolutions IV to X were adopted.

Draft decisions I to IX

Draft decisions I to IX were adopted.

Ms. MEHTA (India) said that her delegation had been unable to join the consensus on the text of draft decision IX adopted in the Social Committee. It would surely have been more appropriate for the Council simply to take note of the recommendations contained in the report of the International Workshop, since doing more than that was going to give the recommendations the unwarranted status of a body of principles arrived at through a true intergovernmental process, whereas many countries, including her own, had not been invited to participate in the Workshop. Her delegation would reiterate that view when the matter came to be discussed in the General Assembly. In any case, the structure and functions of national institutions

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were matters to be governed by national competence alone; there could be no single set of standards in that regard, and the text in question could serve only as an illustration.

Ms. FENG Cui (China) said that her delegation had already expressed its reservations on draft decision IX in the Social Committee; it was not satisfied with certain parts of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1992/54, especially the annex, which contained a number of complex principles whose enunciation in a single set of standards would be very difficult and called for further study. China had not been invited to participate in the International Workshop, in which the recommendations had been drafted only by a small number of experts and therefore did not have the status of a text suitable for adoption by the General Assembly.

Draft decision X

Draft decision X was adopted.

Draft decision XI

Mr. MIN (Observer for Myanmar) said that he wished to reiterate his Government's position that the decision in question was unacceptable and his delegation dissociated itself from it.

Draft decision XI was adopted.

Draft decision XII

The PRESIDENT said that the Social Committee had adopted draft decision XII by 25 votes to 4, with 23 abstentions, in a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision XII.

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against: Angola, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Syrian Arab Republic.

Abstaining: Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ecuador, Guinea, India, Jamaica, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Somalia, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Draft decision XII was adopted by 24 votes to 4, with 23 abstentions.

Mr. MORA GODOY (Observer for Cuba) said that his delegation did not accept the decision and would not abide by it.

Draft decisions XIII to XV

Draft decisions XIII to XV were adopted.

Mr. OULIA (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation had not participated in the action taken on draft decision XV because the decision was based on a Commission on Human Rights resolution which his delegation had voted against and which did not reflect the actual human rights situation in his country or the spirit of cooperation his country had displayed.

Draft decision XVI

Draft decision XVI was adopted.

Draft decision XVII

Mr. ALI (Observer for Iraq) said that Iraq's decision to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights had been based on its desire for constructive dialogue with a view to overcoming the difficulties and misunderstandings surrounding the human rights situation in the country. The authorities had cooperated fully with the Special Rapporteur during his visit in January 1992, allowing him to visit any locations he wished and facilitating contacts with senior Government officials. However, the Special Rapporteur's report was neither impartial nor objective. His aim had been to blame the country and distort its image as part of a campaign waged by certain countries. The report contained lies, fabrications and propaganda and revealed a bias on the part of the Special Rapporteur, who had departed from his mandate and sought deliberately to denigrate the country, instead of contributing to a constructive dialogue aimed at resolving outstanding problems. Iraq categorically rejected the lies and falsifications contained in the report, but reaffirmed its willingness to cooperate fully with the Commission on Human Rights.

Draft decision XVII was adopted.

Draft decisions XVIII to XXVIII

Draft decisions XVIII to XXVIII were adopted.

Draft decision XXIX

Mr. SERRATE (Observer for Bolivia) said that in draft decisions XXIX and XXXI the English expression "indigenous peoples" had been translated into Spanish by the words "poblaciones indígenas". The word "población" was ambiguous and had urban connotations. Besides, it had previously been agreed that the word "pueblos" should be used. He requested that the texts in question should be corrected accordingly.

The PRESIDENT said he would ask the Secretariat to make any necessary corrections.

Draft decision XXIX was adopted.

Draft decisions XXX to XXXVII

Draft decisions XXX to XXXVII were adopted.

Mr. KUEHL (United States of America) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on draft decisions XXXV and XXXVII but strongly believed that, in the current era of budgetary constraints and limited resources, the United Nations should attempt to streamline its activities to ensure that key objectives were accomplished without resort to endless calls for additional resources. Nevertheless, he recognized that the workload of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had increased significantly following the accession of new States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and that the Committee faced an extensive backlog of reports. However, imaginative and cost-effective ways must be found to deal with the increased workload. He noted that an additional appropriation had been projected to cover the holding of the extraordinary session, and he urged the Secretary-General to seek to cover that amount from existing resources.

With regard to decision XXXVII, his delegation felt that it was not appropriate to fund technical assistance from the assessed budgets, but had joined the consensus on that decision in a spirit of cooperation.

Draft decisions XXXVIII and XXXIX

Draft decisions XXXVIII and XXXIX were adopted.

Draft decision XL

Mr. TENNE (Observer for Israel) said that he wished to comment on the adoption of draft decision XL concerning the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its forty-eighth session.

The various resolutions adopted by the Commission on that occasion with regard to Israel had been, by and large, repetitions of the same old and tired lies, recycled year after year by a politicized body whose implacable hostility was nothing new. The tone and content of the resolutions were therefore hardly surprising. What was regrettable, however, was the abuse of the Commission's time and agenda to further purely political ends which had little to do with its real and important tasks.

Since the lies, half-truths and distortions so rife in those resolutions had already been rebutted in detail by his delegation at the forty-eighth session of the Commission, there was no need to repeat its comments. He wished to voice his delegation's strong disapproval of the resolutions contained in the Commission's report. It could not but observe with incredulity the attempt by some delegations at the current session of the Council to transform the debate in the Social Committee on human rights into a repeat performance of the Commission's session. The persistence shown by representatives whose own Governments' record on human rights filled volumes of unspeakable horror, in lecturing Israel on the subject bordered on the absurd, and did not deserve a reply. It was to the other members of the Council, who had recently debated in earnest the urgent need for its reform, that his delegation directed its observation on the need to weigh carefully the wisdom of adopting decisions and resolutions automatically without regard to their veracity, objectivity or balance.

Draft decision XL was adopted.

Mr. KOMISSAROV (Belarus), referring to the resolutions and decisions contained in the report of the Social Committee, said that, by virtue of the adoption of the Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus on 27 July 1990 and the subsequent conferment of constitutional status on the Declaration by the Supreme Council of Belarus on 25 August 1991, the principle of respect for, and the observance of, human rights had become one of the

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fundamental principles of the domestic and foreign policy of Belarus. The new approach to human rights issues was clearly demonstrated, in particular, by the special declaration by his country's delegation at the founding of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in which it affirmed, firstly, that all States must undertake to respect the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments, and also the rights of national minorities; and secondly, that all disputes must be settled by peaceful means through negotiations. Strict compliance with those principles was regarded as a prerequisite for membership of the Commonwealth. The declaration had subsequently been adopted as an official document of the Commonwealth.

The Supreme Council of Belarus had taken a decision on accession to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and on recognition of the competence of the Human Rights Committee under article 41 of the Covenant, and the relevant document would be forwarded to the Secretariat in the near future for registration. Furthermore, in 1992 his country had become a full member of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, with all the human rights obligations that membership entailed. Those developments testified to his country's determination to defend human rights, irrespective of the ideological situation, to eschew double standards, to pursue its cooperation with the organs and structures of the United Nations and other international organizations and with individual States and to endeavour to promote full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It was against that background that his delegation had supported the recommendations and decisions just adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had thus concluded its consideration of item 17, on human rights questions.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (continued) (E/1992/63, 90 and 99)

REVITALIZATION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (E/1992/86 and 101)

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE COUNCIL (E/1992/76)

The PRESIDENT said that, since the three items were being considered as a cluster, delegations might make comments on any one or all of the items in the cluster.

Mr. STRONG (Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) said that the agreements reached at the Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which had recently been held at Rio de Janeiro, represented a remarkable achievement by any standard, despite the fact that they had not met all hopes and expectations.

What had been achieved, particularly in respect of Agenda 21, represented the most comprehensive and far-ranging programme of action ever agreed by the world community, and at the highest possible political level. Together, the Declaration adopted at the Conference and Agenda 21 represented the basic foundations for a new partnership embracing rich and poor and North, South, East and West.

The results had been greatly facilitated and reinforced by an unprecedented manifestation of public concern in the form of the participation of vast numbers of non-governmental organizations and citizens' groups representing virtually all major constituencies and sectors of society in the preparations for the Conference, in the Conference itself, and at the Global Forum which had accompanied it. The interest and attention of people throughout the world had been engaged as never before through the record number of media covering the Conference.

The fact that the Earth Summit, the largest gathering of heads of State or Government ever held, had been convened by the United Nations was of profound significance. There was a recognition that the United Nations provided the only forum in which the world community could unite to pursue the achievement of the common good, and many countries, particularly developing countries and countries in transition, now looked to the United Nations to assist them in implementing the results of the Conference.

(Mr. Strong)

Although fundamental principles had been agreed, they would have to be translated into concrete action. In particular, programmes must be implemented, new treaties elaborated and put into force, and existing treaties strengthened. In addition, practical steps must be taken to provide access to technologies and to mobilize new and additional financial resources for countries most in need of them, as was called for in Agenda 21.

A number of important recommendations contained in Agenda 21 related to the role of the Economic and Social Council in the context of the entire system of the United Nations. Those recommendations provided an opportunity to activate, for the first time, the potential of the Council as envisaged in the Charter. In particular, the recommendation to establish a high-level commission on sustainable development under Article 68 of the Charter could contribute significantly to strengthening the role of the Organization in the interrelated fields of protecting the Earth's environment and enhancing global development. It would, of course, be for the forthcoming forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to determine specific procedural and organizational modalities for the commission, and the Secretary-General was currently preparing a report for the Assembly on such arrangements, as well as other matters related to the institutional follow-up to the Conference.

Agenda 21 was not a definitive prescription for remedying the ills of the planet. Rather, it was a framework for cooperation among Governments and the many other institutions and sectors of society that must be committed to its implementation in order to effect the transition to sustainable development. Its 115 programme areas did provide the essential ingredients for that transition within a framework that would facilitate the continuing process of cooperation, coordination, review and revision.

In order to carry out its role effectively, the primary intergovernmental mechanism recommended by the Conference - the proposed commission on sustainable development - should be constituted as the focal point of intergovernmental decision-making in order to achieve the integration of the environmental and developmental goals outlined in Agenda 21 at the national, regional and global levels. It must also provide a forum for the review,

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further development and updating of Agenda 21 in the light of future economic, financial, technological, legal and other developments, thus maintaining the political momentum of the Earth Summit. Provision must be made for the active participation in its work of all components of the United Nations system, financial institutions and other entities both inside and outside the system, and representatives of the non-governmental organizations sector, in order to ensure coordination with Governments in an evolving global partnership for sustainable development. One of the first tasks would be for Governments to translate Agenda 21 into their own national Agendas 21; for the same to be done at other levels of government; and for each institution to adopt its own Agenda 21.

He was accordingly greatly encouraged that, on the initiative of the Secretary-General, the Administrative Committee on Coordination had already established an ad hoc task force to review the implications of the decisions taken at Rio, particularly in respect of Agenda 21, for inter-agency cooperation, thus providing a timely opportunity for rationalizing and consolidating existing programme review and coordinating mechanisms in line with the overall movement towards restructuring and greater effectiveness.

Implementation of Agenda 21 within the United Nations system must be organized under the leadership of the Secretary-General and within the overall framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, which was chaired by the Secretary-General. The United Nations would also benefit by coordination arrangements to permit further participation of representatives of other international and regional, economic and technical cooperation agencies outside the United Nations system, such as regional development banks.

The follow-up to the Conference would also require adequate and competent secretariat support. The secretariat to be established to support the work of the commission on sustainable development and inter-agency coordination would of necessity be small. Since it would have neither funds to administer nor authority over the organizations, agencies and programmes with which it worked, it would have to have a strong mandate, a high-level status and the highest possible professional quality if it was to win the respect and enlist the full cooperation of the other organizations on which the process of

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follow-up and implementation depended. It should therefore not be integrated into, or subordinated to, any part of the United Nations which had substantive programme and operating functions that might be seen as competitive by the other organizations involved in the process. There was no need for the secretariat structure to be large in size or costly: the experience gained during the preparations for the Earth Summit showed that a relatively small core staff, reinforced by the full and active involvement of the United Nations and other organizations, could be very effective. The new secretariat arrangements to be decided by the General Assembly at its forthcoming session would need to incorporate and build on the experience and expertise of the Conference. It was of the utmost importance that, in the current transitional period, the capacity of the Conference secretariat be maintained at a level at which the secretariat could provide adequate continuity between the UNCED process and its implementation.

One of the most critical issues addressed at the Conference had been how the needs of the developing countries for the new and additional financial resources required to support their implementation of Agenda 21 were to be met. That issue would prove to be the key to the ultimate realization of the results of the Conference. At the Earth Summit, developed countries had reaffirmed their commitment to reach the accepted target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance and to augment their aid programmes in order to reach that target as soon as possible - in the case of some countries, by the year 2000. That affirmation by the developed countries must be spelled out in terms of specific commitments to ensure that enhanced aid flows to developed countries were predictable and could provide a sound basis for long-term planning. Unfortunately, the financial commitments made by some Governments, and the encouraging indications from others, added up at best only to a small proportion of what the developing countries would require to achieve the transition to sustainable development. Agenda 21 proposed the use of all available funding sources and mechanisms, including the International Development Association (IDA). Special consideration should be given to the proposal by the World Bank for an "Earth increment" to the tenth replenishment of IDA. The

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provision of additional funding through IDA, particularly for anti-poverty programmes and related areas of sustainable development, was vital for the effective fulfilment of Agenda 21.

The mechanisms endorsed in Agenda 21 included the Global Environment Facility. Arrangements should now be finalized for the proposed restructuring of that facility, including provision for universal and democratic participation, transparency, flexibility in expanding its scope and coverage, and predictability in the flow of funds without new forms of conditionality.

The recommendations contained in Agenda 21 in respect of debt relief should be translated promptly into specific commitments, and it was important that the future programme of the commission on sustainable development include timely consideration of innovative methods of financing. Agenda 21 also accorded special importance to capacity-building in developing countries and the need to provide new financial resources through the United Nations Development Programme for that purpose.

Of course, no one could reasonably expect all the financial resources required to be forthcoming immediately, particularly in view of the severe financial constraints which most Governments were currently experiencing. What was needed was a substantial and credible first step in mobilizing those resources and an ongoing process that promised substantial further increments over a reasonable period.

Agenda 21 recommended that developed countries, and others in a position to do so, should make initial financial commitments to give effect to the decisions of the Conference and to report on such plans and commitments to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. It would be desirable for a meeting of donors to be convened as soon as possible, and preferably before the end of the forthcoming General Assembly session, for that purpose.

Agenda 21 included a mandate for review and monitoring of the flows of financial resources, which should be systematically combined with a review of the availability of financial resources. The mandate was clear, and what was needed was an equally clear institutional mechanism to give it credible effect. The mechanism for that would need to be put in place as an essential feature of the institutional follow-up to the Conference and of the

(Mr. Strong)

implementation of its decisions. That could be facilitated through provision for a high-level consultative panel as part of, or related to, the commission on sustainable development.

Mr. STOBY (Director, Economic and Social Council Affairs and Inter-Agency Coordination Division, Department of Economic and Social Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council (E/1992/86), said that although a number of the revitalization measures had proved to be of lasting value, others had turned out to be impractical, while some had not yet been followed up by the Council.

With respect to measures of lasting value, the Secretary-General was of the view that the establishment of a multi-year programme of major policy themes was an important innovation. In that connection enough advance notice must be provided so that the reports required for the Council's annual review of major policy themes could be prepared. The themes for the coordination segment, at the least, should continue to derive from a multi-year work programme.

The practice of electing the Bureau of the Council early in the year, before the organizational session, had also proved its worth. Consideration should be given to how to further utilize the Bureau inter-sessionally.

In the category of impractical measures were the proposals to obtain a useful output from the Council's annual general discussion, which member States had already decided to dispense with. The challenge now was to organize the Council's work in such a way that the general discussion did not re-emerge under another guise, particularly in the high-level segment. Further, the Council should review the arrangements for joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination so that decisions could be taken on the future functioning of that mechanism.

Among valid but unimplemented measures was the monitoring by the Economic and Social Council of the strategies, policies and priorities established by the General Assembly and the Council itself. The Council's monitoring responsibilities should be enhanced in some areas. Further, the Council

(Mr. Stoby)

should decide whether the number of items on its agenda, the number of reports submitted to it and the number of bodies reporting to it were compatible with its revitalization goals.

Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit (E/1992/63), he said that the level of resources available to the Unit remained the same as at its inception, even though its workload had increased enormously over the years. In that connection it should be noted that the entire context of the relationship between the Council and non-governmental organizations might need to be reviewed as a consequence of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which had witnessed the participation of thousands of activists not previously engaged in the work of the United Nations. Further, the Conference had called for participation by non-governmental organizations in the implementation of Agenda 21 and in the work of the proposed commission on sustainable development, which would be a subsidiary organ of the Council.

Introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the proposed consolidated mandates of the new subsidiary bodies of the Council (E/1992/76), he said that the item on science and technology for sustainable development in the agenda of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had been reworded to reflect the implications of the Conference on Environment and Development. Given that science and technology constituted an interdisciplinary area, a coherent approach was essential. The Committee on Natural Resources would be reorganized, and would focus on water resources and mineral resources. The question of energy resources would be transferred to the new Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development, which would be called upon to address the important links between environment and development in the energy sector while promoting the use of new and renewable sources of energy.

Ms. SUNDBOM (Sweden) said that the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit served as the secretariat of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which must be provided with appropriate support in order to fulfil its mandate. The Unit served as the focal point for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status, which were expected to number

(Ms. Sundbom, Sweden)

1,000 during 1993. The field of activities of non-governmental organizations was ever-expanding, as were their contributions to United Nations activities. In that connection, NGO participation in United Nations conferences should be handled by the Unit.

The Unit also acted as a focal point for matters relating to consultative status and as such was the repository for information on the activities of all non-governmental organizations in consultative status. The Unit needed resources to build a comprehensive data bank in order to respond to the increasing demands of Member States for information.

Both the Secretary-General and Member States were aware of the need for greater cooperation with non-governmental organizations at a system-wide level, a point raised during the Council's coordination segment. The suggestion that the Council might engage in a direct dialogue with NGOs could be accommodated through the enlargement of the annual consultation between NGOs and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in connection with the next session of the Economic and Social Council. Consideration should be given to drafting proposals that would promote a regular and fruitful dialogue that would supplement the interaction that took place by virtue of consultative status.

While the report of the Secretary-General (E/1992/63) was welcome, it did not offer any clear recommendation for action or any indication of the resources needed by the Unit to cope with its workload. Her delegation held the view that short-term measures were needed to ensure that the Unit could discharge its responsibilities effectively.

In the long term, the capacity of the Unit should be analysed from the perspective of its ability to advise non-governmental organizations applying for consultative status; to set up a computerized data bank; to organize regular briefing sessions; to handle NGO participation in United Nations conferences; to exchange information with other United Nations offices; to promote a direct dialogue between Member States and non-governmental organizations; to provide the services needed by non-governmental organizations in consultative status; and to assist NGOs in the coordination of their activities and in making a substantive contribution to the work of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.